

DOWN MEMORY LANE

By 1889, as George Barrell writes in his book "THIRTY YEARS AT SEA, the land adjoining the old private school on Route 3-A (now Franklin Hoyt's house) had been reclaimed and what had once been a marsh was farmland. Gone was the barn that housed Dr. A's horse which "had a way, when the Doctor stopped too long in a house, to walk home on his own account, sometimes from several miles in the woods." It's "windvane" was a codfish, and attached to the barn was a sleigh-house, "for snows here scale the fences." Barrell complains that this barn "was torn down by these utilitarians."

He said he missed the old hen houses "with high roosts to keep the skunks and minks out." He also missed the pig pen, "graced with a raised platform, and from it this much abused creature had a shelter, with straw in it, that no northeast storm could reach, and that a benighted tramp would be glad to get into." Pigs led a dog's life on some farms in those days.

Gone was the peat swamp, "from which cartloads of this fuel were taken." In its place Barrell found "great trees, whose tops reached the brow of the hill, so luxuriant had nature been in these uncultivated stretches, and I could hardly conceive how the scenery, the old landmarks, the very topography, could be so greatly changed, and that vegetation had so wantonly taken possession of, these intervening years."

A farmer told Barrell that "with a little top-dressing, he wanted no better soil than that of Duxbury."

On August 6, 1851, a curious little newspaper (about the size of Collier's Magazine) named "Sarah Mac's Budget" appeared for the first time in Duxbury. It was full of poems and articles, but there was little in the way of news on its four pages. Some of the advertisements and notices were amusing.

Under MARRIAGES we read: "At Trinity Church, Mr. Holbrook Tubbs, to Miss Mary Hatch. (Shortly after this marriage, Mr. Tubbs was accidentally thrown into a ravine, while at work prying out rocks-whereupon the following Epitaph was composed:

Here lies the body of Holbrook Tubbs-

He got his living by hard rubs;

By the looks of his shirt, and the want of patches,

He married his wife at old Seth Hatch's.-Ed)

We'll let you mull over this epitaph. It's too much for us. Here's a one-column-inch ad:

"Splendid Entertainment.

At The Hall Over The Partridge Academy

This day, at 9 o'clock, will be opened the Grand

Exhibition of the Duxbury Fair.

All persons wishing to procure tickets, can be supplied
by calling at our office.

Opposite the Town Hall

Duxbury, August, 1851."

Did you know it was possible to take regular ocean excursions from Duxbury to Boston a century ago? Here is a short advertisement in "Sarah Mac's Budget": "The elegant and fast sailing Packet, UNION, commanded by T. K. Weston, will leave her moorings in the stream, on Wednesday of each week for Boston, and return on Saturday. Passengers are requested to be at Powder Point Wharf, at any time of the tide."